

Smoke Signals
Product Review
George Hensler
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Gas Grill Oven Plate
Manufactured by Grill Innovations
www.grillinnovations.com
Price \$69.99



If you have a product that you would like to have reviewed please contact me at ghensler@aol.com

Rating system-

- 1 Star- Not recommended, below normal expectations.
- 2 Star- Adequate, room for improvement.
- 3 Star- Does the job, average, middle of the road.
- 4 Star- Good stuff, better than some.
- 5 Star- Exceptional quality, tops in its field.

I received an email asking if I would like to test drive a new product called a Gas Grill Oven Plate. My preliminary research on their website said “convert your gas grill into an outdoor convection oven”. I’ll be the first to admit it, I was a bit skeptical. The literature and website information said you could bake on your gasser just as you would in your kitchen. How in the world could you bake without burning the bottom of the vessel you were using, this I gotta see.

The product arrived and I dug into the shipping carton anxious to see how it worked. The product itself was a fairly simple concept, made from two pieces of aluminum. The top level or cooking platform has several raised knobs to keep your baking dish slightly elevated and away from direct contact with the cooking surface. Included on the top piece are two small wings or tabs to insure the entire unit sits level while in your cooker.



Attached under the top section is another piece of aluminum folded in the center into the shape of a “V”. The area between the two pieces appears to be hollow allowing for an air or insulating space. If I understand the concept, the heat rising from the grill burners is deflected to the side by the “V” shaped bottom of the unit. The heat is then pushed around the entire unit and caused to roll up and around the cooking chamber creating a convection type oven. The entire unit appears very durable and looks like it will provide many years of service.

The science of the process sounded simple enough. I thought back to a conversation I had with Shotgun Fred Pirkle from the BBQ Guru a few years ago. Fred is very successful BBQ cooker designer and manufacturer. He is also very knowledgeable when it comes to the scientific properties that occur inside of the unit you are using, sort of the Alton Brown of grills and cookers. Shotgun once told me that flowing heat has some of the same properties as flowing water; it can be deflected and funneled in its quest to rise, much the same as water trying to get to the lowest point in a basin.

Maybe this Grill Plate would work, I couldn’t wait to get a fire lit and give it a try. I read over everything that I could before my first cook, or should I use the word bake. The most important two items were making sure your grill was clean before starting to bake and making sure you did not preheat the plate before baking. These two instructions made complete sense. If you are baking a cake or a loaf of bread, it would be a great idea to make sure you didn’t have a smoke storm from last weeks rib-eye steaks permeate your product. Preheating the plate could result in an uneven amount of heat to the bottom of your vessel, again, very simple and easy to accommodate.

My first victim would be 6 large Russet potatoes. Not that baking potatoes is an impossibility on the gas grill without the grill plate, but it has been my experience that potatoes need to be moved around to prevent charring or burning. For this experiment, the potatoes were washed, punctured with a fork, coated with a little olive oil, then placed into a shallow baking dish. The only modification to my regular process was the addition of a second temperature sensor to check the accuracy of my built-in thermometer.



As a side note, it is a good idea to clean and check your external and built in thermometers on a regular basis. I use a small piece of steel wool to brush off the thermometer stem inside my grill to prevent carbon build up and maintain accuracy. Units can be checked by using a small pot on the stovetop. Bring the water to a boil, insert the thermometers and check the temperature. Water boils under normal conditions at 212 degrees Fahrenheit, you can check with Google to find out about any sea-level or atmospheric differences in your immediate area. If the unit is faulty and can't be fixed, replace it, you need real accuracy here.

The potatoes were baked to perfection, no burning, hot spots or charring, a complete success. I couldn't wait to try something else. My wife is asked to baked brownies for many family functions, we had one on the schedule for the upcoming weekend, so brownies it will be. She prepped the mix and dish just as she always does, the only difference was we were planning to bake them on our gas grill, to say I was getting the hairy eyeball would be an understatement.

She made sure she had enough ingredients and time on hand to make another batch in the conventional oven should my test run prove to be a flop. I slipped the pan into the gasser closed the lid and set the timer. The brownies baked just like they would have inside. Finished top to bottom, no dark, dry or burnt spots, folks at the party never noticed a difference.



The product performed exactly as advertised, it did everything they said it would. While I realize it is possible to rig your gas grill to bake by using an indirect cooking method,

most time this requires spinning and or moving the baking product in order to produce an even result. Even then, the end result is somewhat uneven. With this product, it is possible to “set it and forget it”, as they say.

In the heat of the summer, sometimes we are reluctant to start up the oven inside because of the heat created as well as the extra strain placed on the house cooling system. This tool would provide us with a reasonable and reliable alternative. I also can see other uses as well. The ability to have a functional standard oven anywhere you have a gas grill, camping, tailgating, during power outages, the possibilities are endless. I am thinking for my next trick, I am going to attempt to bake some chocolate chip cookies, I am just going to need a tall glass of ice cold milk before I get started!

Smoke Signal Rating- 5 Star

